

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 301244Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5136
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 13846

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, NI, US, UR, RH, XA, SF
SUBJECT: AKINYEMI ON NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

1. SUMMARY: BOLAJI AKINYEMI, DIRECTOR OF THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (FOREIGN POLICY THINK TANK) RECENTLY SPOKE IN IBADAN ON NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY. AKINYEMI DEFENDED THE FMG'S SUPPORT OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS ON ZIMBABWE AND ITS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. OF GREATER INTEREST WERE HIS REMARKS CALLING FOR A REEXAMINATION OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD OTHER AFRICAN STATES AND THE ARAB WORLD. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A NOVEMBER 18, 1977 LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN DELIVERED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF DER KAPITAL CLUB, BOLAJI AKINYEMI, DIRECTOR OF NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (NIIA), WHO IS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH KEY FOREIGN POLICY MAKERS IN THE FMG, SPOKE
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ON NIGERIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS. HE DEFENDED THE FMG AGAINST RECENT CRITICS AND SUGGESTED NEW DIRECTIONS IN NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY.

3. BROAD CONCEPTS. AKINYEMI MAINTAINED THERE HAS BEEN A BROAD CONSENSUS IN NIGERIA ON FOREIGN POLICY SINCE JULY 1975. HE CITED THE FMG'S ROLE IN ANGOLA AS THE BASIS

FOR ITS FOREI

N POLICY IN AFRICA AND, THEREFORE, THE WORLD.

HE THEN NOTED THAT APART FROM FRANCE, "WHICH IS DETERMINED TO OPPOSE AND FRUSTRATE NIGERIAN INTERESTS EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD," AND GREAT BRITAIN, "WHERE THE PROBLEM OF GOWON REMAINS A FESTERING SORE," NIGERIA HAS "NO SERIOUS AND FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WITH ANY COUNTRY OUTSIDE OF AFRICA." HE CONCLUDED THAT MUCH OF NIGERIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD IS GOVERNED BY NIGERIAN AND FOREIGN ATTITUDES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND SAID THAT "THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING OUR COMMITMENT ON A SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUE.....REPRESENT PRINCIPLES OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY."

4. ZIMBABWE. TURNING TO THE DEFENSE OF THE FMG, HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAS PROBLEMS WITH CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS HE SUPPORTS THEM. HE ARGUED THAT WHILE SMITH HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO "THE POINT WHERE HE IS PREPARED TO SURRENDER TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT" BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, HE IS NOT PREPARED TO SURRENDER TO THE FRONT AND THAT IT WILL BE THREE TO FIVE YEARS BEFORE SMITH WOULD CAPITULATE MILITARILY. "I CANNOT FIND ANYTHING TO CRITICIZE IN SUPPORTING PROPOSALS THAT WILL ALLOW FOR FREE ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE."

5. UNITED STATES-NIGERIAN RELATIONS. AKINYEMI EMPHASIZED
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THAT NIGERIA'S POSITION AS A REGIONAL POWER IMPOSES OBLIGATIONS "TO BEHAVE AS A RESPONSIBLE POWER RATHER THAN AS A PETULANT AND IMMATURE STATE....IF NIGERIA WANTS TO INFLUENCE OTHERS, SHE MUST BE PREPARED TO TALK TO OTHERS."

6. DEFENDING OBASANJO'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND, INDIRECTLY, THE POSTPONED VISIT OF PRESIDENT CARTER TO NIGERIA, AKINYEMI SAID, "I BELIEVE THAT NIGERIAN VIEWS ON AFRICAN ISSUES CARRY IMMENSE WEIGHT IN WASHINGTON." HE ADDED THAT "THE BLUNT MANNER" OF OBASANJO'S SPEECHES IN WASHINGTON "TOLD THE UNITED STATES EXACTLY WHAT NIGERIA IS DOING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND WHAT NIGERIA EXPECTS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND MULTINATIONALS TO DO."

7. AFRO-ARAB WORLD. USING THE ALLEGED OPPOSITION OF AFRICAN AND ARAB STATES IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ELECTION AS STARTING POINT, AKINYEMI SAID, "WE SHOULD NOW BE PREPARED TO ADMIT THAT THERE WAS TOO MUCH SENTIMENT AND EMOTION IN THE PREVIOUS DEFINITION OF NIGERIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. THE TIME HAS COME TO REDEFINE OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS AND IN THE PROCESS TO INJECT A DOSE OF REALISM

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TRSE-00 /100 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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INTO OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS.....AID AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DESIGNED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ALL AFRICAN STATES ARE BROTHERS ARE ILL-DESIGNED AND MISCONCEIVED. NIGERIA'S REAL FRIENDS IN AFRICA CAN BE COUNTED ON THE FINGERS OF ONE HAND....FRIENDSHIP SHOULD BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF THOSE WHO DO NOT OPPOSE NIGERIA WHERE NIGERIA S DECLARED INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED."

8. HE RESERVED SPECIAL CRITICISM FOR FRANCE AND FRANOPHONE AFRICA SAYING, "THERE ARE STATES WHICH WILL REMAIN IMPLACABLY HOSTILE TO NIGERIA, NOT BECAUSE NIGERIA IS A THREAT TO THEM BUT BECAUSE FRANCE WANTS THEM TO BE...WE ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT A FRANCE OPPOSES NIGERIA AT EVERY TWIST AND TURN. LET US HOPE THAT FRANCE WILL NO LONGER BE ALLOWED PARTICIPATION IN THE BOOMING NIGERIAN ECONOMY."

9. TURNING TO THE ARAB WORLD, HE TREADS MORE LIGHTLY--PERHAPS CONSCIOUS OF THE SPECIAL TIES BETWEEN THE MUSLIM NORTH AND THEIR ISLAMIC BROTHERS. HIS CAREFULLY
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WORDED STATEMENT CALLED FOR "A MATURE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ARAB STATES...WHERE WE CAN APPRECIATE EACH OTHER'S INTERESTS WITHOUT EXPECTING THAT THESE INTERESTS WILL COINCIDE, AND WHERE WE CAN DIFFER WITHOUT RANCOR OR THREATS OF RETALIATION."

10. CONCLUDING, AKINYEMI SAID, "MY HOPE IS THAT THE HARD-HEADED REALISM WHICH WE HAVE SHOWN IN OUR POLICIES TOWARD THE SUPERPOWERS AND IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BE EXTENDED TO OUR POLICIES TOWARDS OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD."

11. COMMENT: AKINYEMI'S NIIA REPRESENTS VIRTUALLY THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN NIGERIA DOING THE SORT OF WORK PERFORMED IN THE U.S. BY BROOKINGS, S/P AND NSC-LEVEL POLICY BODIES. HE HAS CLOSE TIES WITH IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT. HE IS ONE OF THE MOST POTENT AND ARTICULATE PUBLIC NIGERIAN VOICES ON CURRENT AFFAIRS.

12. HIS DEFENSE OF THE FMG'S SUPPORT OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL AND ITS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ARE UNDERSTANDABLE RESPONSES TO RECENT CRITICISM. HOWEVER, AKINYEMI'S ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY REPRESENT A DOUBLED-EDGED SWORD FOR THE U.S. HE SEES NIGERIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD AS A FUNCTION OF OTHER COUNTRIES' ATTITUDES ON SUTHERN AFRICA. THEREFORE, HE IS REMINDING US THAT IF OUR VIEWS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA DIVERGE WE CAN EXPECT A DOWNTURN IN US-NIGERIAN RELATIONS. HE ALSO SUPPORTS THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL ON ZIMBABWE BECAUSE HE BELIEVES THIS PROPOSAL WILL LEAD TO MAJORITY RULE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. CONVERSELY, WE ASSUME IF HE DOUBTS THE SUCCESS OF OUR EFFORTS, HIS EXISTING MISGIVINGS WOULD LEAD HIM TO OPPOSE THE PROPOSALS.

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13. AKINYEMI'S CALL FOR A REEXAMINATION OF NIGERIAN POLICY TOWARD AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD IS AN INTERESTING ONE. HIS VIEWS PROBABLY REFLECT THOSE OF SOME WITHIN THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE VOERNMENT AND MAY REPRESENT THE TYPE OF POLICY DISCUSSIONS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE. WHILE HIS VIEWS DO NOT REPRESENT THE POLICY POSITION OF THE FMG, THEY COULD BE AN INDICATION OF THINGS TO COME.

14. COMPLETE TEXT OF SPEECH BEING POUCHED UNDER COVER OF AIRGRAM.
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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